

# This Old House

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Redo  
your  
porch  
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a roof

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details to bring  
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**62**  
BRIGHT IDEAS

PHOTO: DUSTY PERIN; STYLING: KAREN LEE; DESIGN: KAREN LEE; STYLING: KAREN LEE; DESIGN: KAREN LEE

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### Early access on tablet!

Now you can download the latest issue of TOH on your tablet before the print issue is available. Go to [thisoldhouse.com/tablet](http://thisoldhouse.com/tablet).

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# Reader mail JUNE 2017



**DOING IT RIGHT** *really* matters to This Old House readers. That common thread ran through much of the feedback we received on our March/April 2017 issue. With a deep appreciation for historically accurate detail and an eagle eye for safety, you keep us on our toes—and we wouldn't have it any other way.

## Blending old and new

“Roadside Attractions” (March/April 2017) brought back memories of the 1995 Photo of the Month where I grew up. My parents worked hard to preserve as much of the original house as possible. I imagine my concern when the new owners e-mailed us photos of their “improvements.” All the interior mahogany woodwork was sanded down to the point, and the original door sidelights were replaced with recessed lighting. I hope someday the house will have owners who, perhaps inspired by This Old House, will restore it as lovingly as my parents did.

—MATT DIAZ, COTTAGE GROVE, OR

## Just now

The Palmer 1890 house (“How to Stay” March/April 2017) has amazing detail. I can't wait to see the finished version. The city of Detroit is a diamond in the rough—TOH should look for more of these gems.

—PAUL KASPER, ROLLING MEADOWS, IL

## Safety first

“Snow Instruction: DIY Done” (This Old House, March/April 2017) describes homeowners projects that do not meet code. Yet in the same issue, you show a basement (“Hidden Gem”) with multiple violations that, as a contractor, I could not help but notice. There is no state coding, the steps don't look to code, and I don't see a GFCI outlet by the sink. You have a great and informative magazine, please don't encourage these kinds of code violations by featuring them.

—JIM MARSH, LUTHERVILLE, MD

## Correction

• “Put Your Showhouse to Bed” (This Old House, March/April 2017) recommended filling your tank with ethanol-free fuel. This should have read “ethanol-free fuel.” We regret the error.

READERS  
THIS MONTH

## Real-life Photoshop redo

—BRIAN HUTCHINSON, MI

Thank you all so much for giving us the ideas we needed to make our house attractive again (Photoshop Photo, September 2002). We have had so many people stop by and tell us how great the house looks. My favorite comment is: “You have taken an old house that was unimpressive and made it beautiful.”



# WHAT BAD BACK?



MAKES PAIN A DISTANT MEMORY.

Use as directed.

# home solutions

INSIDE BANISHING ANTS OLD-SCHOOL PAINTS MIXING WOOD AND TILE MORE



## Sheds above the rest

Here's before and after proof that a few simple upgrades can turn a ho-hum outdoor structure into a charming focal point. Confidentially, a dull 12-by-16-foot garden shed in a lawn in a garden plot in Topsfield, Maine, kitchen designer Robin Amerson changed the exterior color scheme and tied the structure into the landscape with overflowing raised beds along the rear. As if that weren't easy enough, she added a deck on the shed's shady side, with a chair for lounging. Functional-beautiful! Two trellises stand ready for vines to scramble up. It's a welcome oasis just steps away from her break spot.



BEFORE

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their own  
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## Ants! There oughta be a law

These pests may be building a home inside yours. Presenting three frequent intruders, and what to do when they come calling

**Know your enemy** They'll have six legs, six-petaled antennae, and mouthparts called mandibles.

**Carpenter ants** are big, black, sometimes reddish-browners. Like termites, they can do a lot of damage to wood and certain types of your cables seen below. They Under terminals, which are at wood carpenters' eye level, they go. If you see piles of sawdust, look up—they may be digging nests near a leak in the ceiling or in unopened leaves. **Fire ants** look like ant-sized regular running train cars to black; they crawl off a notion-cocoon when crushed. These pernickety ants hate soft walls and floors, and while they do love sweets (and are often referred to as sugar ants), they'll go for any food and water they can find. Foragers leave a scented trail to help nestmates find their way, so watch for a long line heading for the lot of dogs. **Pharaoh ants** tend to settle in concrete cracks but will also move into walls, under floors, or stomachs near foundations. Lightbrown-to-black, they're have a warming season. They eat your breakfast cereal, but prefer grease and meat.



**What's it?** Carpenter ants crawl in ceiling wood while the other two types search for accessible water and a steady supply of sweet-scented food debris they can carry away.

**What to do** Trap carpenter in a sticky, nearly empty honeytrap. Sprinkle ant pastries on dry areas with damaged wood, or put tonic acid in previous nests. Take

water. Carpenter ants driven to ceiling wood by the nest—dried out with a vacuum cleaner—then crawl down trails with sticky water to trace them off their nest. They can turn neighbors into pollinators but can also increase traffic. Now go to [tinyurl.com/297673](http://tinyurl.com/297673) (or that's twice behind the same). Carpenter ants are tricky. If you've got these chameleons, or any ant that won't take a bait, call a pro. —CAROLYN BALKWELL

**Why they move in:** All three crave human food and water and accessibility



## A real tweeter

This ceramic bird holds a Bluetooth speaker and LEDs, making it a great patio guest. Fire up a playlist on your smartphone, and a woofer in the walnut base bounces sound off the bird's tail, creating a stereo effect when joined by a tweeter in the lightbulb. Expect about 15 hours of run time per charge, but don't leave this featherless friend out overnight; it can't handle damp weather. JimGoo Bird Cage Speaker Light, \$295; [store.moma.org](http://store.moma.org) —JULIA VAGLICA

## Shady headspace

When the UV index soars, unprotected skin starts to burn in as little as 15 minutes. Sunscreen's fine as far as goes, and you could always give up gardening in daylight, but better would be donning a deep-brimmed hat with generous neck protection, made from nylon with a UV protection factor above 50. The flip looks up if you want to cool off, the crown has air vents and eaves for a comfortable fit, and the chin strap is useful when the wind picks up—if not in the vegetable patch then maybe the next time you cross the desert. Adventure Hat in Everglade, \$39; [sundaysatmoons.com](http://sundaysatmoons.com) —E.L.



## New charm with old paints

Long before coatings came in cans, DIYers painted their walls with lustrous matte finishes that were non-toxic, didn't need primer, and didn't off-gas VOCs. If our types are still sold today, and despite their unique attributes and offbeat ingredients, they generally cost no more than premium latex.



### Milk paint

**What's in it:** Protein and milk protein (casein) leach and earth pigments, youmixed with water.

**Great for:** Brick, concrete, and raw wood; stencils or evil.

**Magic properties:** Has unique hues that change with the light; consolidates crumbly masonry on wood; fights rot, insects, and fire; unaffected by moisture and durable—eight years should last 60 years.

**Cons:** Each coat needs today to dry, not suited for drywall, metal, or painted surfaces; vulnerable to acid rain; isn't flexible; hard knobs.

**Find it at:** [indigopaint.com](http://indigopaint.com)



### Lime wash

**What's in it:** The best washes contain up to high calcium lime, partly an earth pigment.

**Great for:** Brick, stone, and raw wood; stencils or evil.

**Magic properties:** Has unique hues that change with the light; consolidates crumbly masonry on wood; fights rot, insects, and fire; unaffected by moisture and durable—eight years should last 60 years.

**Cons:** Each coat needs today to dry, not suited for drywall, metal, or painted surfaces; vulnerable to acid rain; isn't flexible; hard knobs.

**Find it at:** [heritage.com](http://heritage.com)



### Silicate paint

**What's in it:** Potassium-silicate (type of liquid glass);feldspar and earth pigments.

**Great for:** Brick, stone, and raw wood; stencils or evil.

**Magic properties:** Silicate paints form an incredibly durable calcification with moisture; some have lasted outside more than 120 years; resists acid rain; and unless left to dry paint, they won't smoke or burn.

**Cons:** Very hard to remove, and won't stick to wood.

**Find it at:** [silicatepaint.com](http://silicatepaint.com)



### Clay paint

**What's in it:** Clay, plant-based binders, and earth pigments; comes premixed or in a powder you mix with water.

**Great for:** Concrete, raw plaster, and crystal clay.

**Magic properties:** Clay paint consolidates crumbly masonry on wood; fights rot, insects, and fire; unaffected by moisture and durable—eight years should last 60 years.

**Cons:** Each coat needs today to dry, not suited for drywall, metal, or painted surfaces; vulnerable to acid rain; isn't flexible; hard knobs.

**Find it at:** [backtotheplant.com](http://backtotheplant.com)

—THOMAS BAKER

## Stop garage break-ins

From a burglar's point of view, an attached garage can mean access to the entire house, even if an automatic door opener keeps it locked up tight. A whole-house security system is your best safeguard, but these DIY moves can also help defeat intruders at this potential entry point.



**Block the cord.** Every garage door opener has a cord that, when pulled, connects to the segmented door from the chain, or belt, so you can manually lift it in an emergency. Shrug off any risk from this cord by tucking a coat hanger between the top of the door and the frame. Keep these from reaching the rope with a small straplike device called the Anti Garage Shield (the garage door is shown here).



**Hide the remote.** Many people park outside with the garage door remote conveniently in the car. If a thief gets hold of that—and many do—driving into the garage is simple. If you don't park in the garage, then keep the remote in the house with the car keys or install a device like the universal MyQ system (MyQsystems.com), which uses a smart phone app to operate the garage door.

**Add protective locks.** Unlatching the garage door lock should prevent burglars from opening the door, but it's not a practical safety solution, and many standard exterior locks are vulnerable to picking. Before investing in a lock, try this fix: Attach padlocks on a steel track just above the rollers—you may need to drill holes through the track to accommodate the shank. The door won't budge, but when you return, don't forget to measure the track before trying to open it—it's



## Blending wood and tile in an open plan

Spaces like the one above (by Susan Ann McEntee) inspired renovator Melissa McNight to go for the mix she's been looking for in her Unfinished Look in her Easton, Ohio, house. We asked her how the meshed tile and hardwood

**LEVEL THE SURFACE FIRST.** Melissa's tile contractor accommodated her as much as possible by using a low-profile thinset to lay the tile. She also used a thinset with a thin mesh to build up the transition to the wood.

**CHOOSE AN OUT-OF-THE-BOX SHAPE.** The contractor had to cut a nonstandard shape that's more than 90 degrees (rectangles and squares) and its irregular edges give the irregular border an intentional look. Keeping the tile's width plays up the free-flowing transition to wood. After laying out her tile pattern on the floor, Melissa snapped a photo for her contractor to follow. As the tiles went in, the borders were cut to fit around them.

**MATCH THE FINISH.** Melissa opted for matte tile and a matte floor finish to help unify dissimilar materials. —o-s

PHOTO: SUSAN ANN McENTEE; STYLING: SARA BROWN; DESIGN: SUE ANN McENTEE; STYLING: SARA BROWN; DESIGN: SUE ANN McENTEE

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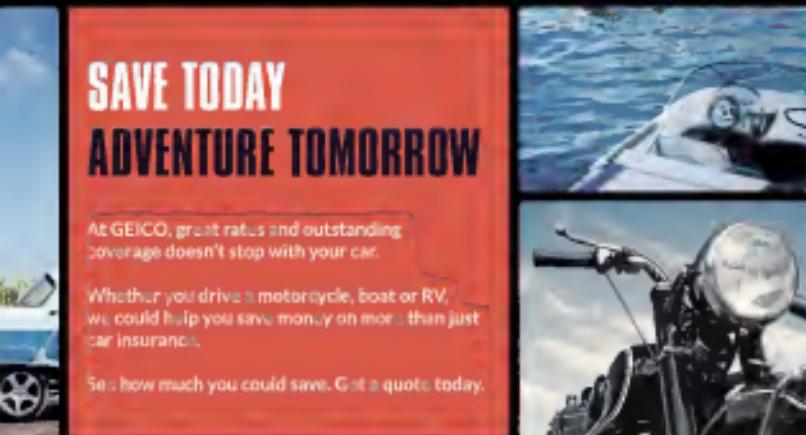


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## In character

An all-new master bath preserves the vintage appeal of a 100-year-old house.

РЕЗАЛТЫ ФОТО - ФОТОГРАФИИ ВЫ АВТОРЫ

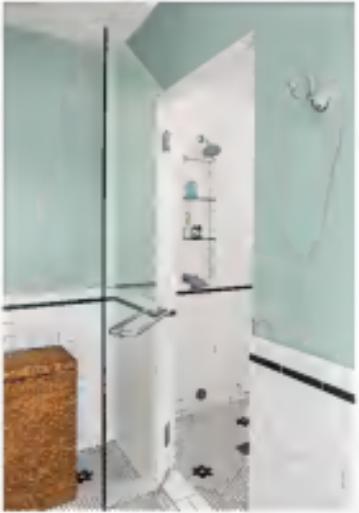
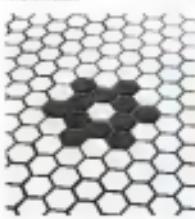
**OLD HOUSE ENTREPRENEURS** Yvette Sagerer and Caroline Schindler knew they wanted a dormer home with a sense of history. They quickly found a 1908 fourplex in St. Paul that had the character and quality of the workmanship they prized—but only one bathroom on the bedroom floor. Getting more space for their growing family had been a

factor in the couple's decision to relocate from Berkeley, California. While their new place had plenty of square footage, they knew that additional bath wouldn't be enough for long. So before making their cross-country move, Yvonne and Carolyn chose to convert a few bathroom(s) into a master bath. "We've lived in houses during renovations, so I remember that whale aspect was actually a relief," Yvonne says. "Our only second child was born during the planning phase, so we had plenty of other things to worry about." Fortunately, they had tremendous confidence in their design-build contractors, Zeta Karsikow Stevens and Ryan Staats. Technology facilitated the cross-state communication, with constant communication by Skype, text, e-mail, and phone. By the time the family packed for the final trip to Minnesota, the bath was nearly ready for the big reveal. "We were finally sure it," Yvonne says, "we were satisfied with the results. It's basic but— and spacious!"

**RENOVATION.** Looking ahead to their sons' bear-paw tubs, the homeowners opted to tear a fourth bathroom rather than update the second-floor's existing bath. The original shower and tub were

**AFTER:** Vintage-style details including pedestal sinks, chrome faucet heads, medium-cabinet doors, black and white tile surfaces give the bath a classic feel. *Photo: Benjamin Benschick*

Hex tile floors with bold accents are frequently found in the neighborhood-type homes. Another Minnesota repeat home! Radiant floor heat. Floor tile: Anderson Clean.



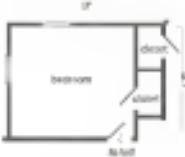
Bringing the bath's vintage style details into the modern era, we removed the chrome fixture and replaced it with a chrome plumb shower and glass shelves in the storage niche. Shower fittings: Kohler. Radiant: Elmetra.

## before

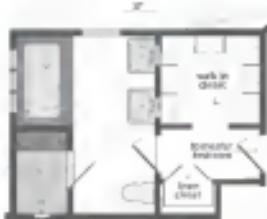
Moving an exterior wall and clearing up an entry allowed for a master bath with ample storage and customizable flow.

## before

A space with two beds, plenty of square footage for the planned master bath.



1 Put the cabin fir corner shelves one window; three smaller ones installed higher up for privacy.



2 Place the shower across the entry, continuing the floor tile into the shower to create a spacious feeling.

3 Add a built-in pedestal vanity for a light, airy look.

4 Create a large walk-in closet where there had been an open-to-a-walk-in closet. Add doors to both the master bedroom and bath.

5 Close an entry door to add a large closet.

PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW LEE



The full, tiled grout deck complements the room's brick and white-pewter. These sand-tinted windows helped an existing double-hung bring in lots of light while preserving privacy. Windows: Marvin.



Christine Schneiders and Tynelle Sognier originally met in the Twin Cities and knew the exact spot where they wanted to live: old, friendly spaces and of course old houses.

Along with the new-lined circa-1910, custom-made cabinets recessed into the wall help maximize for the lack of early storage. Milk glass vases with black pinecones echo the theme. ■ SOURCE: Schneiders Elmetra

## Welcoming front porch for \$286

A little paint and some seating transform a neglected entry area into a charming outdoor room. BY KATELIN HILL



**BEFORE:** The porch was in bad shape when the homeowners moved in, and it required a lot of cleaning and painting before it could be repainted.

**AFTER:** The family now uses the space as an extra room where they sit and eat, read, and play board games when the weather is nice.

SOMETIMES INCREASING a home's living space is as simple as rapping into unused square footage outdoors. When Katie and John Goldsworthy began renovating their 1904 Craftsman house in Spokane, Washington, they wanted more room for their family of nine to gather. Katie saw potential in the run-down, leaky porch and started it overhauled by painting every surface. She used specially formulated porch paint to cover large stains on the floor, opting for a lighter shade of her home's gray exterior, coupled with white rustic patterns wouldn't overwhelm. A fresh coat of yellow on the door

licked off the overall color scheme. To make the space feel like an indoor room, she lugged it up faded outdoor furniture that the family already owned, re-covered existing cushions and pillows with yard sale and scrap fabric, then accessorized with new lighting, textiles, and potted plants.

Now Katie, who blogs at [www.katieskitchen.com](http://www.katieskitchen.com), frequently receives complements on the makeover from her neighbors, and her whole family loves hanging out in the comfortable open-air space. As she says, "It's amazing what some paint and fresh flowers can do!" ■

### THE PROJECT TALLY

Painted striped and stained wooden deck before painting large step and white slatted porch wood floor that gave the front door a coat of yellow. ... \$110

Sprayed painted existing outdoor furniture and re-covered the cushions; stored roofing tool outdoors for flexible outdoor storage. ... \$20

Purchased new plants for seating, flower pots, and planters. ... \$60

Repaired a mismatched sofa with ... \$60

Added extra lighting with candles in outdoor charcuterie and instead of string lights she decorated with homemade fabric scraps. ... \$16

**TOTAL \$286**

PHOTOGRAPH BY KATELIN HILL; STYLING: KATIE GOLDSWORTHY; DECOR: KATIE GOLDSWORTHY

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## The henna treatment

Embellish a deck platform with chalky matte paint, semitransparent stain, and a freehand mandala. BY DEBORAH BAILEY

**N**o one says you have to paint the sun or circle or worry too much about being able to draw like Van Gogh. This freehand mandala is designed for relaxation, while you lay it down as well as after it was created by Bailey Bailey, who blogs at [preetyhandygirl.com](http://preetyhandygirl.com). After finding herself with a plain deck, she decided to do a geometric design. Bailey continued, "An exotic mandala," as the pattern. She sourced her a mandala-like pattern online, then grabbed chalk, spray, paintspack, and a tape measure.

Starting with a center point about two feet from the most prominent corner, she marked the half-decker centerline, only a little further out from the line. After that, she says, "a lot of doodling" ensued—and a lot of effort.

Bailey, Bailey says, will paint the deck and use the same product as a protective top coat (she used Thompson's WaterSeal in Semi-Gloss on her Acacia wood.) Also, get a friend to help, Bailey implored her sister. "Our goal was to make the deck a gateway, to transport you to Bob," she says. Even if it doesn't get you that far, when a mandala covers a deck, pogo, pogo, you're still got an inviting outdoor room and a good reason to stay home.



**PAINTED OUTDOOR FLOORS**  
 Transform worn, cracked, and  
 weathered deck boards and patio  
 floors into handsome semi-  
 painted outdoor rooms.



### STEP-BY-STEP



**1) Using chalk, draw two concentric circles.** Choose a spot in a prominent open area and draw a small circle with the help of string wrapped around a pushpin or eye and small ball of the other. Add the inner circle, which is a little farther out.



**27 Mark a hexagonal hole pattern.**  
Mark four compass points on the innermost circle and add four more equidistant points. Align a large measure with the center and two points, and draw long lines to create 10 H-shaped



**2) START embossing.** Add freshwater flowers, loops, and curlicues to fill in the design, in-ganging the petal-like pattern. In each circle, use a stamping tool to erase any irregularity, as needed.



**4 Paint the patterns.** Use small and medium round and square artist brushes to apply a white paint, such as Winsor & Newton French Linen Paint in Kid Gloves. "That way you don't have to prime," Basley says.



**5) Keep going.** Make yourself (and ideally a friend) comfortable and gradually complete the pattern if your block is a plithorm style like this one. Don't forget to turn the block 90 degrees along any edge, unless there are arrows.



**6) Sand and seal.** When the paint is dry, use an orbital sander and 1000 grit paper to "age" the pattern. Wipe away dust before applying a clear coat with an exterior enamel paint. Allow it to dry a day. Then arrange a family portrait on the pattern and photograph it.

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Reviewed by J. D. Powell

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Prime a  
Window



Install a  
Solar Panel  
Battery



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## Indoor-outdoor rugs

On your deck or in your dining room, patterned carpets that clean up with a sponge (or even a garden hose) are as practical as they are pretty

BY KATE WOOD • PHOTOGRAPHY LISA BRIN

AS OUTDOOR LIVING gains more traction and latitude, all-weather furnishings that add indoor-level comfort are more in demand than ever. Creating an area rug made from hard-wearing, synthetic fibers is an easy way to enhance a space and make it feel like a room, even if it's in the middle of your yard. Their durability also makes these rugs handy indoors, especially in high-traffic areas such as mudrooms and laundry rooms, or spill-prone zones like dining rooms and kids' spaces. Best of all, they come in an inspiring range of colors and designs. Here, 13 options to rock your feet into.



1 > tropical leaves

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2 > sea life

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fibers for pet  
resistant; non-slip  
soot; SHDtarget.com



3 > bold floral

**BBTILE HOME**  
Made of: Hand-knotted  
polypropylene  
Size: 3'8" x 5'8"  
Highlights: Pop-art styling;  
indoor-outdoor hooked rug  
2000 allmodern.com



**5 > bright star**

**ARCHAIC**  
Made of: Recycled polypropylene  
Size: 4'W x 8'L  
Highlights: In addition to being reversible, this Sherman Manufacturing rug puts UV protection into overdrive.

**3 > cool kilim**

**POTTERY BARN**  
Made of: Handwoven recycled polyester  
Size: 3'W x 8'L  
Highlights: This country rug uses a kilim-like pattern and plays up the lived-in element.

**6 > rich texture**

**DISASTER**  
Made of: Polypropylene  
Size: 3'W x 8'L  
Highlights: This country rug uses a kilim-like pattern and plays up the lived-in element.

**7 > neutral gear**

**ALDOTHILL**  
Made of: Polypropylene  
Size: 4'W x 8'L  
Highlights: This country rug uses a kilim-like pattern and plays up the lived-in element.

**8 > pattern play**

**YAPU**  
Made of: Handwoven polyester  
Size: 3'W x 8'L  
Highlights: This study Southwestern-style pattern is surprisingly soft to the touch.

**9 > blue ombre**

**EL MACHO HOME**  
Made of: Handwoven polypropylene  
Size: 3'W x 8'L  
Highlights: The plush, faded texture integrated underfoot plus the patterned UV resistance make this a must.

**10 > chic chevron**

**CAPE RUGS**  
Made of: Handwoven polypropylene  
Size: 3'W x 8'L  
Highlights: The bold patterned rug has a secret: it's easy to pull off in mixed shades of cream and teal.

**11 > geometric**

**TAZI HOME**  
Made of: Handwoven polyester  
Size: 3'W x 8'L  
Highlights: This reversible rug's bold diamond pattern is a surprising twist on a classic.

**12 > double take**

**RALIN**  
Made of: Handwoven polyester  
Size: 3'W x 8'L  
Highlights: Usually seen in more rustic designs, this reversible rug's bold diamond pattern is a surprising twist on a classic.

**13 > new classic**

**COLONIAL MILLS**  
Made of: Recycled polypropylene  
Size: 3'W x 8'L  
Highlights: Usually seen in more rustic designs, this reversible rug's bold diamond pattern is a surprising twist on a classic.



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womansday.com/rugs

## Tomato time

From meaty beefsteaks to teeny cherries, this summer staple comes in a rainbow array of sizes and shapes. Here, tips for growing success, plus recipes to enjoy.

BY BILL WAGNER • RECIPES BY SUZAN QUACK • PHOTOGRAPHS BY KRISTINA KOLIG

**FORESEASONED** gardeners, who likely started seeds long ago, planting a homegrown tomato is proof that summer has truly arrived. But even amateur and procrastinators—with a few summer plums from the local nursery or early weeknight delivery from grocery—is on the many seasonal rewards. Just consider some concentrate choices below to have.

Full-flavored, multi-colored heirloom tomatoes are enjoying a renaissance, so gardeners should have a nice seedling selection of these taste-pleasers. Defined as open-pollinated varieties grown prior to 1940, heirlooms are prized for superior taste, but some can take a long time to fruit. Hybrids developed after 1940 are favored for their improved disease resistance and earlier yields.

While the tomato family includes thousands of varieties, there are six main types. Large, heavy heirlooms can be bushy or hybrids (like "Big Boy") and result in a pound of meat. At 6 ounces or less, smaller globe varieties, such as "Lioness Boy," are medium size. Strawberry-shaped condiments, including "Aunt Fannie," are a flavor-variant group with few seeds. False suns (calandras, like "Wich Peper") are symmetrical and easily germinated. San Marzanos fall into the Roma, or paste, category and are often preserved in pie. Tiny cherry, grape, and pear varieties have bright, tight skins and sweet flesh.

To maximize your growing space, consider a plant's form. Bushy determinate varieties, like 'Sweet 'n' Nott,' can smother beds,



卷之三

When they are cut about 3 feet high, bearing fruit in a four- to six-week window before decking. Large bush beans have room for indeterminate, or vining, varieties, such as "Early Girl," which can grow 8 feet tall or more, with a spreading yield well back. Semideterminate, like "Celebrity," fall in between. They're not as big as vining varieties but they produce until frost. Dwarf determinate beans, like "Tuscan" and "Candy Stripe," work well in containers, with a harvest point.

Stone-bought plants should be about 6 to 10 inches tall and free of flowers or fruit. In containers or in the ground, all transplanted seedlings have the same light and soil requirements: eight hours of full sun, with afternoon shade in very hot climates, and rich, well-drained soil. Use a pH soil test kit (available at home centers) and amend soil as needed until the results are between 6.0 and 6.8.

To plan, dig holes 13 inches deep, if possible, and backfill with amended soil over two-thirds of the time, pruning leaves from the buried stem as you go. This encourages new roots to sprout, enabling the plant to absorb winter and fertilizer. Space transplants 1½ to 2 feet apart for circulation, discouraging leaf mold and blight. Stake or cage roses, even bush roses, right after transplanting to keep them clean and lessen the chance of disease. Add a 3- to 4-inch thick layer of organic mulch as the bare four weeks after planting in moderate and moderate, block weeds, and keep transplanting water from carrying leaf spores from the soil to the foliage.

Most tomatoes need two feelings of a balanced 5-10-10 or 3-10-5 fertilizer added when the plants grow that is about the size of a golf ball and again when the first tomato is ripe. Avoid overfertilizing, which breeds growth without any additional fruit. Container plants need more fertilizer, about every 10 days. Keep the soil consistently moist by adding 1 to 1½ inches of water per week. I find success by raking the ground from time to time and splitting after a heavy rain. Pluck ripe tomatoes while they are not fully ripe. Fully developed color is a good indicator.

Then head to the ladies' Up next, some recipes to make the most of all that beautiful beauty.



## THE RECIPES

### 5-Minute Cherry Tomato Sauce

1996年1月1日施行的《中华人民共和国合同法》

This is an unrefined full basic bone meal since it which you can add chopped artichoke hearts or chopped quartered olives and capers. Toss the salad with freshly cooked pasta and garnish with basil leaves.

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 pint-size cherry tomatoes
- 3 garlic cloves finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon feather salt

- ½ teaspoon granulated sugar
- Pinched pepper flakes
- 8 large basil leaves, whole or thinly sliced
- Freshly ground pepper

In a large, deep roasting skillet, heat the oil over medium heat until it is hot but not smoking. Add the cherry tomatoes, garlic, oil, sugar and pepper flakes. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring and smashing tomatoes with a fork until just tender about 5 minutes. Stir in the basil and season with salt and pepper to taste.



### Southern Tomato Pie

SERVES 8 AS A MAIN COURSE

Use your favorite pie crust recipe (or a frozen pie crust) for this savory pie for the kids. Adults like it as a variety of toppings and herbs for a more elaborate pie.

Preheat oven to 425°F. Butter a 9-inch pie plate. Shred and chill.

Drain beans or pea pods.

2½ pounds bacon (either thick-cut or thin-cut), sliced and fried

1½ pounds green beans, peeled and sliced

1½ pounds yellow wax beans, sliced

½ cup chopped fresh herbs (such as basil, chives, parsley and thyme)

½ cup grated Cheddar or Jarlsberg

½ cup freshly grated Parmesan

plus more for topping the pie

3 tablespoons Dijon mustard  
½ cup mayonnaise

Preheat oven to 425°F. Press the dough into a 9-inch pie plate. Trim the dough to a ¼-inch overhang. Cut the diameter of the pie plate; fold the overhanging dough under (so it's long on the ends of the plate). Chill 30 minutes or until firm. Using a floured eggbeater, roll the dough and line the edges of a 9-inch pie plate.

Line the pie crust with a large square of parchment paper (for the oven) and 1½ cups dried beans. Place the pie crust on a baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes. Remove the beans by lifting out the parchment.

Return the pie crust to the oven and bake another 5 minutes, until the crust is light golden-brown. Cool completely on a wire rack, about 30 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F.

Preheat oven to 425°F. Press the tomatoes in a single layer on paper towels; sprinkle lightly with salt. Let stand 10 minutes to drain.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat and cook the onions 3 to 5 minutes, until tender. Season with salt and pepper.

Pat the tomatoes dry with more paper towels. Reserve about 7 tomato slices for the top layer. Fill the pie crust with alternating layers of tomatoes, onions, arugula, mozzarella cheese and mayonnaise and top with the tomato layers. Top with the reserved tomatoes and some additional grated Parmesan.

Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes or until lightly browned; shield pie edges at the 20-minute mark for browning and cover edges with foil to prevent further browning. Serve hot.

### Heirloom Tomato Salad

SERVES 8

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 garlic clove, minced and crushed with 1/2 teaspoon
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

#### SALAD

- 4 large ripe heirloom tomatoes (or 4 pounds of regular mixed varieties)
- 2 ears fresh corn
- 3 cups shredded goat cheese or feta cheese
- 1 cup thinly sliced red onions, rinsed and drained
- 14 cup basil leaves, whole or cut into strips
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise

Whisk together the vinegar ingredients in a small bowl.

Cut and cutback tomato crosswise—4 thick slices. Shave corn 2 to 3 minutes until and half the kernels remain kernels by running a knife down the sides.

Place one tomato slice on each of 8 plates. Drizzle with a third the mayonnaise. Top with a little cheese and/or goat cheese with corn kernels scattered. Continue layering the ingredients ending with a tomato slice and basil and cheese to garnish. Let marinate about 15 minutes at room temperature before serving.



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You'll find all the tools and supplies necessary for this—and any—home project at The Home Depot nearest you.

For step-by-step instructions, go to [thisishouse.com/project](http://thisishouse.com/project)

Roasted Tomato, Brown-Sugar  
Bacon, and Mozzarella Sandwich

MAKES 3 SANDWICHES

This is a deluxe twist on the classic BLT. You can skip the bacon and the bread.

- 3 ripe plum tomatoes, split lengthwise
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar, divided
- Kosher salt
- 1/2 pound bacon, thick-sliced
- 2 tablespoons granulated brown sugar
- 4 slices thick Tuscan-style bread
- 12 ounces fresh mozzarella, thickly sliced
- Fresh thyme leaves

In a bowl, toss the tomatoes with the oil and 1/2 pinches of salt. Place out-side directly in baking dish and set to do.

Place 2 racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven and preheat to 400°. Line a large baking sheet with foil, then lay with a large baking rack. Arrange the bacon slices in single layer on the rack. Sprinkle evenly with the brown sugar. Place the tomatoes on the upper rack and the tomatoes on the lower rack. Place the bacon on the 2nd tier of the oven rack. Roast for 10 minutes on the first tier, then flip the bacon and the tomatoes and roast for another 10 minutes. The bacon should be blistered and the tomatoes should be soft. Continue roasting the bacon until crisp, about 10 to 12 minutes longer.

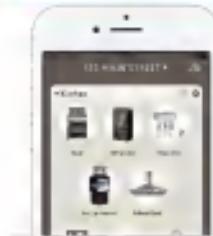
Pull off the skin and leave the tomatoes warm. Lightly toast the bread and brush one side with several pinches of the granulated brown sugar. Arrange the 2 warm 2 pieces of toast side-by-side. Top with tomato, then cheese, then the slices of cheese. Drizzle the cheese with olive oil and top with the leftover bacon. Top with the remaining slice of bread, folded salts down. Cut sandwich in half and serve. ■

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## Pretty classic

Victorian-era farmhouses offer space, easy living, and a frilly facade, whether they sit on sprawling acreage or on the outskirts of town. BY PAMELA GWYN KRIPKE

**YOU MIGHT SEE IT** In a simple country house, you dressed up a bit. Or in a monarchial Queen Anne or Gothic Revival that has gone easy on the ornate. The Victorian-era bungalow, built as the main residence or a guest-and-family, blends the plain verandas, or porches, front porches of the rural landscape with decorative finials and pasted-down design elements found elsewhere on corrugated roofs.

At mid-stage mortared sun-dried mud and agave mortar in the mid to late 1980s, they brought with them an alternative, ready-to-mix, factory-made wood mortar. Elaborate spandrels, overhanging brackets and ornate balustrades, previously crafted by hand, were being produced by scroll saws and widely dispersed, resting upon decorative facades of concrete and wood. Many were indigenous E- and T-shaped houses wrapped in chrysanthemums; some were past-variation of their former customs, with a bay window here, a gabled roof there.

Unlike the grander styles of the period, the *lancet* house generally does not boast towers, spires, and decorative ridges. Ornamentation usually consists of the porch and the *casement* bays, where soft mullions will. Flat *groat-cast* or *spandrel* panels are common, extending the full length of the porch, point raised or square with chiselled edges. Detailed brackets often soften the transition between the two front-facing gables may be castellated and are frequently adorned with decorative mullions at the top. Windows are tall—again to channel a warmer breeze—with *casement* bays.

Today, these houses draw inspiration from uncluttered space, ease, and function. Subtly built and unpretentious, with uncluttered floor plans, they adapt to modern lifestyles as easily as they did to working farms over a century ago. Here, some samples for sale across the country.



WENHAMTON, MA, 02324-900  
Details: 3 beds 3 baths 1480 sq ft. built in 1990  
Highlights: Fully renovated updated electric and plumbing. Large unfinished basement, attached garage. 25-acre lot, in town.  
Contact: Dan MacLean, Coldwell Banker 413-534-3524



**RICHLAND, Inc.** Sch. #600  
Details: 6 beds, 2 bath/s. 2,721 sq. ft. built in 2007  
Highlights: Original post-and-beam construction. Large, open floor plan. Spacious kitchen. 3 bedrooms overlooking back deck. Large front porch. Central Air Conditioning. Seller Wilsons.



WA55, MD 5590,000  
Details: 5 beds, 3 baths, approx. 6,500 sq. ft., built in 1979  
Highlights: 12 feet ceilings, mastering/marble, 4 fireplaces  
central AC, floor-to-ceiling image house, 40' Peg sample house  
Contact: Maureen Clark, Berkshires Hathaway-Hines, 500-355-2080



LAKESVILLE CT, \$599,000  
Delano, Stevens 2 Bdrms, 2.43 Sq. Ft. 10/16  
Highlights Hardwood floors, some original trim and moldings  
soffit, kitchen, laundry. 3 season room, views, sunroom, kitchen  
Contact: Juliet Morris, Elysian Homes Real Estate, 860-460-0548



**BRENTWOOD, TX: \$568,000**  
Details: 3 beds, 2 baths, 2,327 sq ft. Built in 2003.  
Highlights: Gated community style 2-tier, half-timbered porch. Enclosed wine cellar. Walk-in closet with built-in shelves. 8 acres with horse/guest quarters. Contact: Bassett Real Estate, Market Realty, 972-377-1555.



ПОДДЕРЖАТЬ ВСЕХ МОИХ ПОДОБНЫХ

## Now hear this

Voice-activated digital assistants can handle an increasing number of helpful tasks at home. Are you ready for your house to talk back to you? **BY NATHANIEL WIDE**

**AMAZON'S ECHO** is voice-activated voice speaker, has emerged as a surprise hit since its debut in late 2014, thanks to its playful responses and a remarkable ability to pick up commands even when spoken casually from across the room. The standard Echo is a 9.25-inches tall cylinder that plugs into a power outlet and connects to the Internet over your home Wi-Fi, with numerous microphones that listen all the time for a single “wake word” that triggers a response. “Alexa, where’s the nearest” and Echo promptly responds with a fluid briefing from, say, Yelp.

Echo’s growing number of “skills” includes playback of podcasts, streaming radio, audiobooks, and music, providing basic stats and math answers, and control of smart lighting and compatible home devices such as a lock on the front door. Most of Echo’s smarts actually live in Amazon’s powerful cloud computers, so new capabilities don’t require a software update in the home hardware. Alexa can even host a “Jeopardy!” session. No surprise that Echo is also happy to help you shop from Amazon. (“Alexa, order mouthwash.”)

Apple’s main rival—Apple’s Siri, Google Assistant, and, to a lesser extent, Microsoft’s Cortana—have their own strengths. For one thing, they are more integrated into user phones for on-the-go control.

Cloud Assistant, though, for showing off all that the wireless, shared presence in a room of the stand-alone, dedicated speaker can do as a controller. “Alexa, what’s the weather?” becomes part of the morning banter when getting dressed. Drop your keys in the vector and instruct, “Alexa, set a timer for 10 minutes,” or “Alexa, play soul music” when enjoying the dishwasher or setting the table. Kids



### 1) Amazon Echo, \$199

Our favorite voice-controlled digital assistant for the home works from anywhere in a room and is rapidly adding new tools—Alexa plays Jeopardy! The Echo Dot (\$69) has a smaller speaker (and costs out to connect to a speaker system the same as its larger sibling). Limited to the U.S., the U.K., and Germany—for now. [amazon.com/echo](http://amazon.com/echo)

agree with delight (“Alexa, play ‘knock-knock’”) and even teach a sleepless who ultimately hate the robot conversations (and responsiveness, because it controls microphones). (Don’t these babies might at least be a little wised by the hands-free capabilities.) Amazon has also introduced smaller, less-expensive versions of Echo to extend its presence throughout the home and in mobility through other devices using Amazon’s iOS shopping app.

The post-winter Google introduced its own connected speaker, Google Home,

and infused it with the same voice-controlled Google Assistant that was launched in Google’s flag-ship Pixel phone. Google Home is playing catch-up, for sure, but is already quite good for people who use a lot of Google services, such as Google’s music and movie service (Google Play) are integrated in Google’s Chromecast devices that function as a bridge to the Internet for TV’s (Chromecast Ultra) and other speakers (Chromecast Audio). Sync your phone with Google’s free phone

service, for instance, and you can issue magic commands like “Okay, Google, show my Mexican City photos on the TV.” Google Home also leverages Google Search, making a smart assistant when answering questions—“Okay, Google, what’s the wine goes with come chicken?” That can sometimes go horribly wrong with political questions, especially in our current age of fake news, but it’s also quite fun in the middle of dinner to pose riddle questions (“Okay, Google, what’s the longest river in the world?”).

Apple’s Siri, the original voice-activated digital assistant, doesn’t have a stand-alone speaker to call its own, but it uses Google Home as the home-front with an advanced, more-secure platform for the connected home called HomeKit. Tapping around Apple’s free Home app, it’s quick easy to set up “scenes” with HomeKit enabled accessories—lights turn on and off, thermostats adjust, shades open or close—that are activated with a simple “Hey, Siri, I’m home” or “Hey, Siri, movie night!” spoken right on Apple Watch, Apple TV remote, iPad, or iPhone. As with Google Home, Siri is most useful if you’re already a regular user of Apple services like Message and iCloud. In addition to its own encyclopedic smarts (“Hey, Siri, who won the 1980s World Series?”), Siri can access your iPhone’s address book to place calls, send text messages, and schedule calendar events, plus snatch photos on your phone or play just about any song through Apple Music.

As you look for the most sensible digital assistant or overlapping combinations, our strong suggestion is to take voice control as a series of possible tasks, no less than clicking the right buttons with a mouse or tapping a touch screen. Use logic as an artificial intelligence that can make sense of your whims, but we’re not there yet. Voice control works best when you rehearse and build up a comfortable repertoire of defined commands. Listen out! “Hey, Siri, good night.” ■

### 2) Google Home, \$199

Google’s recent answer to the Amazon Echo is better sounding and less expensive, but so far still less useful, including many fewer “in-the-home” tools that are offered in Apple’s Siri and the Amazon Echo. We recommend Google Home for users of Google’s Chromecast and for streaming music. Expect more features for users of Google’s calendar in mail and Android services in Google with more machine-learning features to个性化 (make) [google.com/home](http://google.com/home).



### 3) Siri

Apple’s most controlled assistant. Siri has been built into iOS devices since 2011, with steady improvements that sometimes even turn up to early TV sets, passing a command over the iPhone. Current iOS devices can interact with the iPhone “Hey Siri” commands, even when nothing else. Siri is great now for timed deliveries and works with many apps to make restaurant reservations (OpenTable), movie tickets (Fandango), and movie (Popcorn). Combined with HomeKit, Apple’s privacy-minded standard for connected appliances allows Siri to give you voice control of HomeKit-enabled appliances. [apple.com/home/siri](http://apple.com/home/siri)



### 4) Cortana

Microsoft has largely lagged off-the-phone effort from other firms. Instead, with 100 million to 150 million digital assistants from its home on Windows 10 devices and the Xbox One gaming platform. The user-controlled app is mostly under-used, a big 2.0 running, settings, calendar, reminders, and lesson quizzes, and math tools for Office 365 users. Cortana, named for the AI character in Microsoft’s Halo video game, aims to personalize itself over time. [microsoft.com/cortana](http://microsoft.com/cortana)



## Reinventing a split-level

Front-facing gables, a mix of siding, and Craftsman-style details make an unremarkable home into a standout

BY KATE WOOD • ILLUSTRATION BY DRAWSKILL, INC.



BEFORE



**SPLIT LEVELS** gained in the 1950s due in part to a modern floor plan that offered easy circulation. But from the outside, their style was often lacking. "It's so unrefined and bland," Abigail Beever says of her 1959 split-level in Battle Creek, Michigan. "A Craftsman look would feel much warmer and more inviting." So we turned to Real Cedars of Holmes Schreier Architects for ideas. His proposals focus on tastefully Craftsman elements to transform the boxy facade. Wide eaves with deep overhangs and brackets break up the main roofline. Shingle-style metal accent roofs over the entry and the garage give the exterior even more dimension. To disguise the lower, out-back portion of the house, Schreier's plan adds stone veneer and chimney brackets. "I want my house to be robust and eye-catching," Abigail says, "and this is gorgeous!" ■

### finishing touches

Textured surface treatments and an earth-toned palette support a Craftsman-inspired takeover



**garage doors**  
White carriage-style garage doors cost \$1,000 each. Grey panel doors cost \$1,000 each. [click here](#)



**roofing**  
Architectural shingles in a rich periwinkle grey upgrade the main roofline. QAF Timberline HD Shingles, about \$300 per roofing square. [click here](#)



**stone veneer**  
Gives your midcentury home bright modernity. White update the Craftsman look. Trig (depotexpress.com), Chipotle Pavers (chipotle.com), and Shingle Heritage Block Stone (\$18 per 20x6 West panel). [click here](#)

PHOTO: ANDREW HETHERINGTON/REAL CEDARS

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REALCEDAR

## Make a cedar planter

Tom Silva and Kevin O'Connor work together to build a beautiful, freestanding piece of furniture that will dress up any patio or deck

BY THOMAS BAKER • PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTHONY TIBALI

### A LUSH WOOD planter

Infusing with vines and flowers of a rustic, welcome sight to outdoor spaces. Here's how you can make yourself out of durable, rot-resistant western red cedar that will last a lifetime.

**The Old House general contractor** Tom Silva designed it to look like a piece of furniture, with four tapered legs that allow the underside to stay out of the deck or patio underneath to be cleaned. He also provided an air space between the wood and the soil by putting the potting mix in two milk crates lined with landscape grow bags. When driven freely through the bags, the crates and the planter's open bottom, without touching the sides.

For ease of construction, Tom attached the planter's sides, legs, and top with stainless steel pocket screws. These hidden fasteners are small low-profile holes bored with a special bit and bit. Once the holes are made, assembly is a snap.

To see how this handsome piece is constructed, read on.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTHONY TIBALI



### TOOLS

- tape measure
- miter saw
- little saw
- shims (thin)
- mallet and mallet (ball)
- 1-inch radius roundover bit
- Mitre plane
- pocket hole jig
- bar clamp
- drill driver
- orbital sander

### MATERIALS

- plastic milk crates (2)
- 12 by 32-inch grow bags (2)
- 2x6 lumber and cedar for rails, top, and stringers (Get 32 feet)
- 4x4 lumber and cedar for legs and crosspieces (Get 10 feet)
- Landscape grow bags for sides (Get 16 feet)
- stainless steel pocket screws
- 2x6 inch stainless steel deck screws
- 1/4-inch stainless steel wood screws
- wood glue
- 220 and 320 grit sandpaper
- penetrating oil finish for decks

### STEP-BY-STEP

#### Cedar planter



**1 Cut the notch.** Using a miter saw, cut off the corner blocks except the crosspiece at the base, following the cutout on page 16. Mount a 10-inch stacked crosspiece to a table saw as shown to cut notches (Grooves) in the planter's rails and (miters) notches in the ends of side panel pieces. Set the blade to make 1/8-inch deep cuts.



**2 Cut the sides and notches.** Position the base (you made notches) side up into the notches on the top and bottom rails, as shown. The often side notch is right, planing 1/8 inch out of the inside panel pieces and the rails on the planter's outside rails.



**3 How they fit together.** Set the rail on the end of each panel piece up into the notches on the top and bottom rails, as shown. The often side notch is right, planing 1/8 inch out of the inside panel pieces and the rails on the planter's outside rails.

STEP BY STEP  
CONTINUED  
ON PAGE 44

## STEP-BY-STEP

## TIPS

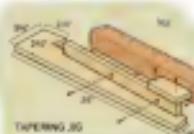
How to make  
tapered legs

• **Cutting a taper** is best done on a table saw using a tapering jig, which angles the stock away from the fence. You can buy an adjustable tapering jig, or build your own lead and crosscut carriage (layout of assembly shown at right).

• **To saw the legs**, first, turn the legs perpendicular to the jig's fence, slide the leg under the T-jig, and hold the leg in place by driving a couple of screws horizontally through the 1x2.



**4] Taper the legs.** Replace the dado blade with a tenon blade. Rip the legs to width (see cut list) and rip each thickness to 2 inches square. Next, set up a miter gauge (up to 45°) and a crosscut sled on the saw. Set the sled to 2 1/8 inches from the fence. Hold the leg in a vise, turn it 90°, and cut the second taper. Repeat with the other three legs. Use sandpaper to smooth all the miters and ease the sharp edges.



**5] Shape the legs.** Check a 1-inch radius sander to make a radius (about 1/2 inch) on the outer and inner edges. Turn on the sander and feed each leg's unrounded edges until the spacing between the leg's outer length and a 1/2-inch radius (make a slight channel) in the leg's outside edges of the panel pieces.

**6] Drill pocket holes.** Use a pocket hole jig and bit, drill evenly spaced holes through the inside faces (not the faces with the 1/2-inch radius) on both ends of the rails, as shown. Next, drill pocket holes into the inside faces of the top rails, about 1/8 inch off the unrounded edges of the leg. Drive pocket screws into the leg, as shown.

**7] Attach the top rails.** Clamp a long, rounded edge down to the workbench. Place a top rail on 1x spacer blocks with the pocket holes facing up. Lay up the rail's underside with the top of the leg, and pull the rail tight against the leg. Drive pocket screws into the leg, as shown.

## TIPS

How to use a  
pocket-hole jig

**8] Set the sleds.** Adjust the jig and the stop collar on the bit to match the thickness of the stock. Both settings are shown on the jig.

**9] Make the panel dividers.** Make sure that the cross-grain of the panel receiving the notch runs perpendicular to the recess. Turn the planer knobs to 0.

**10] Adjust the drill clutch.** Set the drill torque so that the pocket screwheads sit tight to the bottom of the pocket without going into the hole.

**11] Double-check the screw length.** The screw tip should not exit the wood.



**12] Attach the bottom rail.** Rest the rail pocket holes up on 1x spacers and insert the ends of a panel piece lengthwise into the dividers, leaving the 1/2 inch reveal on the outside. Clamp everything to the workbench, as in Step 7. Rest the rails on 1x spacer blocks so the top rail is flush with the leg's top, leaving a 1/4-inch gap between the rails and panel pieces. Pocket-screw both rails to the legs.

**13] Assemble one side.** Slip the remaining panel pieces into the rails dividers, leaving the 1/4 inch reveal on the outside. Clamp everything to the workbench, as in Step 7. Rest the rails on 1x spacer blocks so the top rail is flush with the leg's top, leaving a 1/4-inch gap between the rails and panel pieces. Pocket-screw both rails to the legs.

**14] Assemble the box.** Rest the top rail on the legs specified on the cut list. Drill pocket holes in the ends of the long pieces, then pull the panel joint together so the rails sit straight in the joint. Then, keep the rails flush as you drive the pocket screws through the rails. Wrap up a 1x8 as a clamping cap. Now nail the 1x8 across the end of each corner to the top, and place the box upside down on those marks. Pocket-screw the lap joints to the top 6 inches. The lap joints let the box stand in a corner, stiffening the box and preventing it from rocking.



STEP-BY-STEP



**12 | Sand the top.** When the planter dries, in about an hour, fit an orbital sander with 220 grit sandpaper and sand down the tops and corners. Also sand the undersides of the top's edges and corners to smooth any glue residue in the joints. Follow up with 320 grit to eliminate scratches.

**13 | Construct the base.** Cut four identical crosspieces from the 4x4s (two on each side) and two identical trusses from the cedar 2x6x12s. Glue and screw the crosspieces to support the crates. Position one side of each crosspiece flush with each stringer's underside and fasten the planter's perimeter in a ladder-like frame with 2½-inch deck screws, as shown.

**14 | Install the base.** Slide the base, oriented right down, between the bottom walls as shown. Set the lower edge of the trusses on the crosspieces. Position the lower edge of the bottom rails, then fasten the stringers to those rails with 3½-inch wood screws.



**15 | Fit the planter.** Put the planters into the mill circles and set the circles on the planter's base, as shown. Place the planter in its final location and fill with soil and plants. Top off the soil from the sun and weather. Apply a penetrant using an old brush made for decks. ■

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more details.

CUT LIST

**TOP**  
Nineteen (nineteen  
long points)  
2 at 38½ inches  
2 at 34½ inches

**BASE**  
Four (four)  
2½-inch wide  
2 at 21½ inches  
2 at 18 inches

**TOP RAILS**  
Nineteen (nineteen)  
2½ inches wide  
2 at 27½ inches  
2 at 33½ inches

**BOTTOM RAILS**  
Nineteen (nineteen)  
2½ inches wide  
2 at 17½ inches  
2 at 21½ inches

**STRONGERS**  
Nineteen (nineteen)  
2 at 31 inches

**CROSSPIECE**  
Twenty-four (twenty-four)  
offsets from legs  
4 at 30½ inches

**PANEL PIECES**  
Nineteen (nineteen)  
2½ at 18 inches

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## Build a fire pit patio

On their own, handsome stone pavers expand a home's entertaining space, but add a fire pit and your yard becomes a destination. BY RALI WALLACE • PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTHONY TIRIBI



**ALONG-LASTING PATIO** is a lot like a smooth paved job—it's all about the prep work. You put pavers down on a flimsy base, and it might be only a few seasons for the stones to shift and become a tripping hazard. Woburn, Massachusetts, homeowner Michael Killen, along with landscape designer Jennifer Novak and landscape contractor A. Bruno & Sons, focused most of the project time on creating a rock-solid foundation. The fire pit, made from massive salvaged blocks of granite, anchors the patio design and keeps the leveling going after the sun goes down. Follow along as they show you how to construct a bluestone patio around a centerpiece fire pit from excavated base to bluestone cap.

**KEY WATCHES**  
The base of this patio  
will determine  
the placement  
of your fire pit.

### TOOLS

- mason's line
- hammer
- tape measure
- line level
- shovel
- plate compactor
- rakes
- garden hose
- masonry trowel
- utility trowel
- leveling stakes
- sanding sponges
- 12" square
- masonry level
- mini excavator with blade
- digging bar
- level
- rubber mallet
- loppers

### MATERIALS

- pavers
- paver base (a blended 6-inch crushed stone and sand mix)
- 48x64-ft (about 100 pavers) 6-in. paver base
- leveling stakes
- granite blocks (4 long blocks used at 4 ft by 4 feet each about 22-in. high)
- 16-in. square tamper (about 8 lbs) to fit the fire pit
- all-weather 6-ft level (24-in.)
- 120-lb bags bluestone pavers  
Cut dimensions: 36x36 (36x36)  
36x30 (36x30)  
24x30 (24x30)
- layout chalk line bags

### DAY-TO-DAY TIMELINE

**SATURDAY** Prep the base and install the fire pit (Steps 1–3)  
**SUNDAY** Lay the bluestone pavers (Steps 4–5)

shovel and  
wheelbarrow

plate  
compactor  
tamper

W/ snow

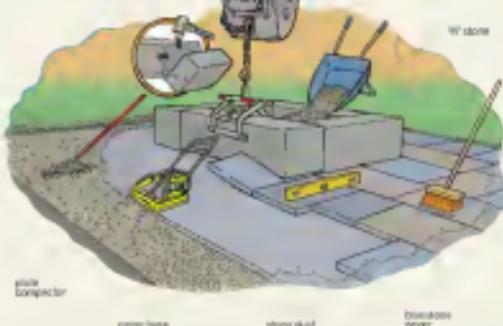


plate  
compactor

stone dust

bluestone  
pavers

**FINISHED DIMENSIONS:**  
Patio: 36x36'  
Fire pit: 4x4'



COURTESY OF A. BRUNO & SONS

## 1 Compact the base

**A) Build the base.** Bring a tamper within 6 feet of the stakes around a fire pit beyond the final patio size. Add three more pavers for string lines to complete the patio outline (approximately using the 3-4-5 foot rule (thagorean theorem)). Use a line level to slope the strings 1/4 inch per foot; tamper will settle the pavers and move them if necessary. You have all the base lines to measure the height of the base in your soil. Remove and replace them as needed. How-dig up the topsoil layer, about 8 to 12 inches, then bring the subsoil with a garden hose and rake it level.

**B) Compact it.** Dampen the paver base with a garden hose to keep down the dust, and run the plate compactor over the surface. Add a second layer of paver base, rake it from around the compacted area. Repeat with 8-inch layers until the foundation is 2 inches below the finished

## 2 Split the granite

**A) Dry-fit stones.** Determine the location of the fire pit—ours is centered in the patio and parallel to the nearby deck. Use the painter's marks on the outside perimeter of the finished fire pit on the compacted base. Stretch a mason line across the cut base, 6 inches in to stakes beyond the perimeter lines, then square it to a perimeter string. Then measure the thickness of one of the fire pit walls and, if it's over 4 inches, square the pavers. Trim the granite to length (ours are 12x26 inches); start by drawing a cut line with a saw pencil along three sides of the stone. Crack a 1/8-inch masonry bit into a Stanley hammer, then put on hearing and lung protection. Drill a series of holes 3 inches deep and about 30 to 4 inches apart along the cut line. Tap the bit in to water to keep your dusted.

**B) Add wedges.** Set a pair of curved steel feathers and a wedge in a V configuration. Fit the wedge between the feathers, which should curve out and away from each other. Tap each wedge lightly with a 3-pound dead-blow hammer until it cracks.

**C) Strike the steel.** Using the side of a hammer and working sequentially, hit each wedge a little at a time until the rock splits along the cut line.

**D) Remove the new stone.** Once the rock cracks, pull the feathers and wedge out and pry away the wedge, exposing the new split stone.

**TIP** To save time, ask if the stone yard can cut the granite blocks to size and set them in place on the base.



## 3 Build the fire pit

**A) Set the first stone.** Use a mini excavator fitted with a blower attachment to square the first section of granite into place, or hire a landscape contractor to help. As the operator lowers the stone, use a digging bar to guide it into alignment along the painter's marks made earlier. Set the stone in place and check for level, then lay a 1/4-inch thick paver base to the fire pit's underneath and reset the stone.

**B) Finish the fire pit.** Set the second piece of granite on top of the first one, making a corner. Check it for level, then repeat the process for the remaining granite pieces.



## 4 Set the patio height

**A) Add drainage.** Dump a 2- to 3-inch deep layer of 1/2-inch crushed stone into the pit and raker level. This stone will help the fire pit to drain after a rain.

**B) Set bluestone height.** Snap a mason line across one side of the fire pit 2 inches above the compacted base, as shown. This line represents the finished height of the bluestone once the pavers are compacted place.

**C) Compact stone dust.** Add a 2- to 3-inch thick layer of stone dust over the base and tamp it to about 1 inch.



## 5 Lay the bluestone

**A) Set the first stone.** Work out the pattern on graph paper first. Then lay a 2x8-inch long piece of bluestone about 1/4 inch away from the edge of the pavers and extend past the fire pit corner by about 1/4 inch, leaving enough room for the second paver and the joint. Make sure the paver is evenly spaced away from the masonry line by the fire pit. Check the bluestone for level, then set the 1/4-inch-thick paver with a rubber mallet to set the stone.

**B) Turn the corner.** Place an 8x8 or 10x10-inch paver next to the first one, leaving a 1/4-inch wide joint between the stones. Check that it's level, then set it with a mallet.

**C) Finish the pattern.** Continue building out the bluestone pattern, using 24- and 12-inch pieces to cover together while keeping the outside edges of the pavers straight. Slagger the joints between neighboring pavers.

**D) Fill the joints.** Spread stone dust over the finished patio and brush it into the joints with a broom. Repeat until the joints are full. Then wet the paver stones with a water bottle to settle the pavers. Add peastone around the edges of the pit to hide any exposed base material. ■

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# ask This Old House

**Q** One of my copper gutters can't handle the volume of water running into it. Would adding another downspout stop the gutter from overflowing?  
—MICHAEL WALICK, DORCHESTER, MA

**A** Another downspout would double your gutter's capacity, but that means you'd have to remove the gutter and reinstall it since high point is halfway between the two downspouts. Try these simpler fixes first: Check your downspout for clogs, and correct any sags along the gutter's run. If that doesn't work, a bigger downspout in place of the existing one could help. Remember, when adding or replacing a downspout, be sure it's made of copper, like the ones on this page.  
—THE EDITORS



**47**  
tips, tricks, and  
answers to  
your home-  
improvement  
questions

PHOTOGRAPH BY BURCU AVCI

TRANSFORMER.COM 33





## What is it?

### • Drawer slide

This diagram illustrates the mounting of drawer slides in a cabinet, ensuring that each slide square to the cabinet front and level with the opposite slide. Works with both frameless and face-frame cabinets. \$25 per pair. [house.com](http://house.com)

injection with oxidizing media. "In contrast to effective, some manganese-based filters have to be recharged periodically with another potent oxidizer, potassium permanganate.

All these filters work best with water in the 6.5 to 8 pH range. And they all have to be backwashed—regularly—to remove the buildup of iron particles. The process uses a lot of water, about 10 gallons per minute per square foot of manganese media. If the system is calibrated properly, the iron re-

backwashes itself for manganese removal and septic systems.

When comparing iron filters, make sure you know how many gallons of backwash they'll likely require, the required flow rate during a backwash, and the cost of any chemicals that have to be added.

### Fix for cracked concrete steps

I've tried many times to fill the cracks between my panted

concrete steps and the stuccoed half-wall outside my front entry. But the repairs always fail within a few years. Is there a way to fix this once and for all?

—DUSTY RANGER, MARISITA, IL

### SEVIN O'GORMAN REplies

I followed pictures of your cracked steps to masonry contractor Mark McCallum, owner of MJM Masonry, who worked on the recent TOH Arts & Crafts TV project house in Arlington, Massachusetts. Here's what he had to say:

"Generally, walls like the ones flanking your steps are built on solid foundations, while the concrete steps are just poured on the ground between them. These walls won't move, but clearly the steps have

settled to the right. I suspect they've stopped settling by now, so a horizontal permanent repair should work.

"For stable gaps like these, I'd use Quikrete Fender Repair Mortar ([quikrete.com](http://quikrete.com)). It's stiff enough so it won't sag out of the gaps before it sets, and it has added polymers that act as bonding agents to the existing concrete.

"Then, clean the area with a wire

### Ask THIS OLD HOUSE

Carly (@thisoldhouse\_carly) T/OH  
Or write to: Ask This Old House  
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brush and compressing it, then dampen it with water. Apply painter's tape to the steps where you don't want the mortar to stick and render walls not yet bond breaker; you don't want the mortar adhering to the wall. Soak water into the mortar, following the instructions on the bag, and apply the mix with a trowel or a trowel, pushing as much mortar as you can deep into the cracks. Then go back and fill them. Flash. You have about 15 minutes of working time. After that initial set, smooth and sculpt the repair with a brick trowel. Remove the tape and cover the patch with plastic for 24 hours to ensure that the cement cures properly. It can be painted after three days.

"While you're at it, patch the stucco where it meets the steps

Quikrete's Pre-mixed Stucco Patch is a good choice. Apply fresh strips of tape to the cracks and stucco, dampen the area to be patched, and trowel on the mix. Use a sponge to smooth the texture. Remove the tape and wait 24 days before painting the patch and the rest of the wall."



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STEPS ARE  
SINKING CRACKS?  
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Much as we appreciate the wonders of climate control, there's no better feeling than opening the door and letting the breeze fly by. Welcome back, summer. We've missed you.

# Bright Ideas

A lively yet restrained paint palette turns a century-old white box into a cheerful family home

By Deborah Baldwin

Photographs by Ken Gutmaker

Produced by Tisha Leung

Styling by Rachel Cleveland Reedy

**Don't take Selma Blanscet** all that seriously when she tells you she almost passed up her Sonoma, California, bungalow while viewing it on a different house nearby. "I didn't transpire I would fall in love with it," she says of the one she did, she was home with. "It was pretty wonky down." But Selma knows a find when she sees it: A compulsive renovator with a terrific eye and nimble resources, she was able to take one look at the feature-on-base wallpaper, horrendous shag carpeting, and smoking range hood and say a stylish, light-filled family bungalow, as enterprising as smart and sunny as its measured 4,600-sq-ft lot.

The four-bedroom, three-bath house had been painted an unfortunate peachy-pink that made it look dated, plain walls, white oak floors, nine-foot ceilings, and 3,200 square feet. It also suffered Selma's, as Sonoma, a piece of her adopted town's history: White Sonoma is famous these days for its tasting rooms and \$400-a-night hotels, not all that long ago it was



ABOVE: A front entrance porch enhances the facade of the 1907 house. Homeowner Selma Blanscet, who can't resist "odd" or "quirky" attractiveness, "matched new interests to what was there, right down to the colors of the beaded representation," says architect Tish Leung. *Opposite:* Kitchen (top) and breakfast room (bottom).

OPPOSITE: Staggered Shaker-style cabinets with hidden storage create kitchen efficiency; additional cabinetry is painted in a matching grey. *Inset (bottom):* Designer Moore's Let's Color palette (bottom).





part of Mexico and populated by Nahuatl Americans. "The founder of Somers, General Vallejo, gave it to his son Panos," Selma says of her property, which, during its most eventful, coughed up a number of pre-Colonial artifacts. Vallejo built a plaza down town, within walking distance of the property, but Somers was still pretty low key when early-20th century successors settled in the area. Cash crops included prunes and walnuts. Selma's 1967 house most likely sat in the middle of an orchard.

Dotted mostly with crab apple, palms, and prairie grape vines, the property came with an orchard that is a noble, conjuring image of a grandfather's farm. Selma, a single mother of two, liked the idea of raising sheep. "It's flat, so you can get on your bike, sheared—[it] really appealed to me," she said. "However it would require a son-in-law."

Pearson owners had cared for the place over many years, while owning any property to keep it up-to-date. At some point, the kitchen had moved into a larger space. Selma dated its most recent refresh to the 1960s.

Though she speaks about having wanted to

restore the house to its original glory, that may not be the right word. Old photos show a white box with black shingles, originally built without indoor plumbing. Six years ago, when Selma bought the place, the plumbing still hadn't entirely moved outside. Cost-cutting papers reflected the extreme

She was already a veteran renovator, with the gut renovation of a sprawling Queen Anne in Seattle behind her, and this job looked, at least at first, pretty straightforward: new plumbing and wiring, new baths and kitchen, better heating and cooling. The traditional layout—"one square room after another, entry and entrance"—pleased her.

But of walls didn't have to come down, they did need them up. The house sits on an earthquake-prone site and 75 mph winds aren't unheard of. The owners' first stage involved stripping down two perpendicular exterior walls to make them shear walls, anchored in concrete footings and strengthened to near-magnitude 7 factors.

Despite Selma's many daytime whereabouts—eight years in Asia operations at Microsoft, currently a certified personal trainer and a financial

AMONG LEFT: Behrmannsas and green marble pavers.   
BEHIND: The front porch that long ago gave way to the kitchen addition. The ceiling and the parlor-style built-in are finished by a handpainted green marble.   
CHARTER: Chandelier: Sheep Dog Dragon Table: Ethan Allen Hutch: Wood Touch Hutch: Knob and pull: Antiquemage.   
Pants: Banana Moon's Freedom Denim.   
RIGHT: A

ABOUT AUTHOR: The front entrance is a combination of old and new.   
PHOTOGRAPH: Michael



advised—the basis around, most-modest career as a renovator and landlord whose portfolio swelled at one point to more than a dozen properties.

She started shedding tears after the kids arrived and now focuses on her own needs, where she has brought no bear some hard-won life lessons. Among them: Don't take for granted without a seconded you, preferably one you know, whether you are building an addition or replacing a shingle roof.

To build up the Sonnenhausen, she brought in two local old-home experts, architect Robert Baumann and general contractor Christiane "Klimm" Gruppe.

MOVE: A new bay window painted up a slate grey is a welcome new living room and brightens up light along with built-in built-in shelving enough for lounging. Like shelves added during the day, the shelves need previous details from existing windows. In this case, replacing the fireplace surround. **Designer:** Gérald Bergeron. **Architect:** Gérald Bergeron. **Style:** Shabby Chic.

sure a hard-nose padding style and proportion, which is Robert's expertise," she says. "What I like about Chris is he doesn't sound the fire alarm when he finds something odd."

"Bath plumbing on the outside—you don't see that often," says Gripp, adding philosophically, "It's easier than going inside the walls"—something his crew of course had to do.

Grippa also faced himself installing many walls and, to his greatest surprise, having to install missing renders over the windows and doors (renovation experts worked on the windows themselves). Grippa

entry). The fireplace is marble frame flanking the living room to the kitchen, where matching marble serves as counters. The carved opening on the left leads to the former dining room, possibly a kitchen in 1900, see the family room.

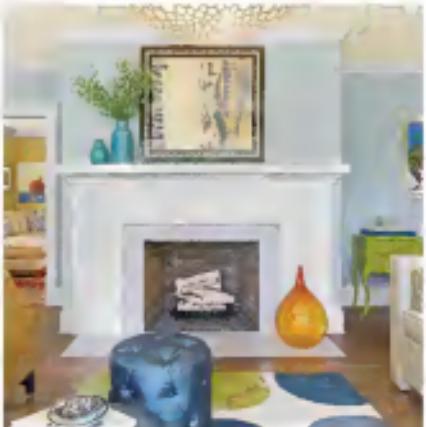
rebuild the kitchen atop the bones, with floor-to-ceiling cabinetry, a breakfast nook, and quartz counters flowing to match what was there. During the renovation's first year, Grapich's crew would also repair the chimney, fix the arched, and add a wood-burning half-bath in the master bedroom—an alternative to the master bathroom a full bath would have required.

Generally, Griggs says, the house was sound, thanks partly to the quality of the 1905 lumber that went into it. "A lot of lagging was going on," he says of that innocent and banalized reuse. "Quartermill fir was our expense."

Baumann's architectural refinements included new porches, bay windows, and dormers, which simultaneously added interest and dimension to the exterior and elbow rooms inside. "They create charm and warmth," Baumann says of the resulting sleeves and, in the case of the porches, "butlers'-style transition areas" between indoors and out.

As a final touch, the team painted the exterior of the original white and replaced the decorative shingles with ones that open and close, a reflection, Salina says, of a smile, of "my little shingle-messengers."

Could this polarized gen possibly need anything more? Well, yes. It came two years later as the form



## Floor plans

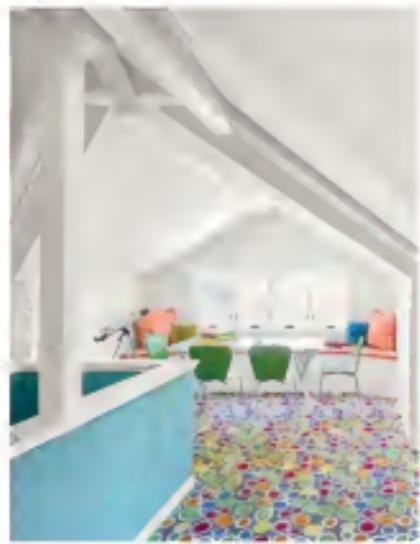
The Iberian (above) is roughly 3 200 square feet with its meandering layout with arched bay windows, galleried, tiled patios and fireplaces, offering much of the width (given not shadow) for leisure being space. The Iberian (left) is a traditional residence and the master bedrooms are tucked away in a wing because the Iberian is an irregular territory. Each interior walls are yellowish ochreous stone units.

### First Flow



## SECOND FLOOR





of a two-gable-wrapped porch, looking as neatly composed and massed as the living room was.

Property improvements didn't stop there, though: maybe it's best not to mention the doves of sheep that now keep the grass under control or the horses in the stable or the fire-breathing exercise studio just across the little pink and turquoise to dentil detail she has on every gable end.

"The wood-work is key," Selma says. "The doors are all solid wood with the panels and glass knobs. The baseboards are a consistent eight inches or so. And we used a bright white throughout with two main colors, blue and yellow."

The rationale for the cost of all? Before parting over money down, sort up the character of a house and the quality of the materials that went into it. And when you're ready to remodel, go ahead and convert people whom you trust. Selma invited interior designer Kim Rutherford and John Morris, who runs the local paint store, to lead a prep—but "doesn't design for someone else," she admonishes. "Find out what you aspire to in terms of style and furnishings, so you can express that."

Selma credits two influences for her success in an old-house novice: her kindly parents, who grew up during the Depression and taught her the importance of a nest egg, and a then-ancient-grade 1987 book, *Housewise: The Smart Woman's Guide to*

**OPPOSITE:** The master bedroom is a converted former sleeping porch. The white ceiling panels evoke the past in new Conga furniture. Shades of Light Windows. *PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY M. VALDES*

**ABOVE LEFT:** A whimsical centerpiece in the sitting room: a table holding a pair of the walls and the floor.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** A new sunroom addition holds a gathering spot for the kids and their aunts. *PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY M. VALDES*

*Buying and Renovating Real Estate for Profit*, by Susan Rose Brangham. (Small-world footnote: After renovating some 70 houses, Brangham is now a come-backer, herself, and restaurateur—in Sonoma—and has restaurants in the former home of husband Valdes's daughter.)

When she was just getting started, Selma says, "I would buy a house and fix it up with the intention of holding on to it and bringing back in income. The more I did, the more I was annoyed." But in her salvaging-a-house-for-profit-for-itself, there's a true payoff, she adds. "It ends up being equal parts financing the past and breaking new life into a house you love."

That goes double for a house with period detail and proportions—and maybe the occasional window seat. "When people come in, they respond because it's traditional and expected," the says of her forever house. "They feel such a sweet calm." ■



# small wonder

A homeowner with a magpie's eye and a restless imagination turns his own little slice of Buffalo, New York, into a magical garden brimming with ideas

BY JEANNE HUBER | PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROD CARDILLO

**W**hat flower-filled English country front garden, brick path, arched windows, and flower boxes dripping with vines, that Buffalo, New York, home has enough mere bookshelves to fill a children's book? For a glimpse of the lightning-bolt basal crowning the ivy-covered arbor in the few clear that the garden scene is less Peter Rabbit, more Harry Potter items *Alice in Wonderland*.

Commissioned from a local sculptor, the lightning bolt looks a lot like the scar on Harry's forehead. Walk way the gardens, and you'll see the address

posted on the garden shed is 2139—the house number plus a reference to Professor McGonagall. The character of the 1899 house is refreshingly robust paneled beds out front and a matching shed. The yard was just a few months from media tree stumps when the owners moved in 18 years ago. TOP LEFT: LEFT: The lightning bolt basal; a fish-shaped soap bar made into a fountain; a trio of Mexican star lights seen through a window.



Platform 9½, where Harry takes the train to Hogwarts world. A dense planting strip featuring odd-looking specimens such as sensitive plant (*Mimosa pudica*), which has leaves that curl up when touched, is where a sign proclaims the garden's address in THE HARRY POTTER GARDEN. And, evoking the play—and characters in Alice's wonderland, diamond shapes are everywhere—in paving, landscape, markers, even the pointed-leaf windows and shutters.

But in the real world, gardens like this one don't just happen with the wave of a wand or a nibble on a mushroom. They take time and tool, as well as someone with an eye for design and unfogging creativity—someone like Jim Charlton. The graphic designer loves to spend frigid winter weekends sketching and drafting new features for the garden, then heads outside to make them happen as soon as the weather warms. His wife, Leslie, keeps it all looking fresh, carefully weeding and deadheading. "We like to joke that Jim is the gardener, and I am the groundskeeper," she says good-naturedly.

At their previous home, the pair had opened

ABOVE: Hugging the driveway on one side and a back fence on the other, the meandering shed adds privacy from the street and shelter from the sun. **Jim's Impact:** It's built with a rough stone edge of a textured paver with maple and grapevine trees flanking. Alongside the stone is a raised planter box covered with ivy and a cluster of ornamental chrysanthemums surrounding a hammered copper chrysanthemum fountain.

OPPOSITE: Leslie and Jim Charlton by the tiled door



their yard to horses during Garden Walk Buffalo, an event that now draws an estimated 65,000 people each summer. Jim, who served in town when attending college there, was on the tour the year it began, in 1993. "Half the yards I went into, I thought, 'My garden is better than this,'" he recalls. "So the next year, we put our garden on the tour." Then the organizing committee asked him to design a poster and a map, and he got hooked, eventually serving as the organization's chairman for seven years. "People love us just as friendly—friendly friends," he says, clearly pleased. When the Charltons moved into this house, 16 years ago, they were eager to put it on the tour too. Only problem, Leslie says, was that "the yard was just a tree, some grass, and a few shrubs."

Now, for 14 summers, Jim's added not just of the front lawn and planted perennials. "Having grown up with a suburban pad, where every weekend, maybe we were mowing or raking, I just wanted to get rid of the grass," he says, as though he likes to live about. Another early project, unmoored to grass,

## the plan

A concrete driveway leading to a garage at the back of the 50-by-126-foot property divides the manicured yard in half, but rather than undercarving the expanse of the garden, the paved strip serves as an inviting, spacious path for visitors. A deck tucked between the house and the garage provides an outdoor dining area on the right. On the left are the garden shed, a hedge-bordered transition to the kitchen garden, and a sitting area.



above: A tiny shelter made of concrete pavers and glass panels. In the kitchen garden, stacked lava stones create a stepped border for a raised bed. The low, high stone walls create little nooks where visitors can sit and relax. The formal elements transition to a more rustic look, with plants beyond walls, including herbs like lavender, as the season progresses.



was installing a new roof on the 1897 house. It had a rosy glow on the highest peak, but Jim wanted something more dramatic. So, riffing on the idea of a lightning rod, he came up with the lightning bolt.

The lot is tiny, an 8-foot-wide garden just 59 feet wide by 116 feet deep, with a driveway that backs it lengthwise. But within two years of moving there, the Charlens went back on the gardens just. Just last year, they have added one new feature: a deck, a kitchen garden, an arbor. When their daughter, Marigold, was 6, Jim started a way to interest her in gardening and hit on the idea of planting a Harry Potter garden. They shopped for the odd-looking plants they could find and labeled them in ways that would delight children who had read the books. A purple plant (*Euphorbia corollata*) because Gollum, described as "stony grayalgae" in *Lord of the Rings*, became "boulders." A red plant (*Coreopsis coneflower*) became "broombeams," the ideal wood for making wands.

The tagline on Jim's blog—"I like gardens, I like design, I like to travel, and I like to share"—hurts at another notion for the magic in that garden. Since

OPPOSITE: On the shed, painted in the same colors as the house, rustic-pasturage scenes serve as a lively backdrop until the flowers grow. Jim and his wife, Linda, built the peeling boards with leftover slate tiles to emphasize the garden's thermal theme.

ABOVE LEFT: Inside Jim's painted studio, wall-to-wall with salvaged barn planks and shelves made from salvaged wood.

ABOVE RIGHT: The Harry Potter garden is a reminder of Jim's love of books that has the family but also their daughter's young heart. It's a way to move old plants into new life.

Little work was light around the Charlens, so they uphanded for practically nothing. Away from home, they shop for gardeners, and they keep their open-air fair frames to adapt over they return.

The custom-made roof on the front and back gardens, which have very sheer branches hanging a central arbor, were something they first spotted in Italian orchards in the Dolomites. The kitchen garden grew out of a tiny in-France, where they became enthralled with the cut-and-come again gardens in mountainous rural to Massif's gardens in Grenoble, where the kids high fence of espaliered apple trees, checkerboard patios—alternating squares of concrete and gravel—but smaller rooms. "We saw it in France, and then I did my own cheaper version," Jim says.

The dominant design trend in the garden—this stands—came from a vacation Nogales Falls garden. "It was the year Jim's project was building, I wanted to shape a year tree equal to his," he says. "Dinosaurs were the extent to dig up." Later, he would to build an arbor and bought wood beams from Home Depot.



G

that had square openings. "I was playing, I was lost and thought, 'Oh, I should angle it into diamonds.' It were from there. The next time I had to make a decision 'Oh, a diamond, that's easy!'"

The Chatterers' most challenging project, by far, was the potting shed, which measures about 10 square meters, replacing a broken play structure they had used with the house. Three years ago, Leslie asked Jim what they should do with the space, and they settled on a small building to house the wheelbarrows, putting soil, overwintering plants, and other garden necessities that were taking over their garage.

They wanted the shed to match the style of the house, and it had to be small enough to fit on one side of the driveway. The plan they settled on called for an 8-by-12 footprint, and under the 144 square feet that suggests the need for a building prover w Buffalo Jim's graphic design skills came in handy as he sketched various designs. He re-created the drawing they liked best on his computer. Using Adobe Illustrator, he worked out proportions and calculated dimensions. Then he was ready to cut

above: Potted plants, many of which overwinter in the potting shed, soften the transition between the garage and the living shed. Left: A whimsical Jim's lego-like planters house!

RIGHT: A whimsical, lattice-set trellis decorated with colorful painted leaves, a hanging mobile, and a black goat (Bos tauri) (Therriault) to prove you can sail the house.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE DIRECTORY PAGE 86



I

wood, sand, and poured concrete, and built it all on his own, with occasional ladder, holding help from Leslie and Morgan, now 13.

Inside, Jim's upcycled canisters, often from their house, double as the original diamond-paneled windows. Jim built window boxes from old, lowered closet doors, and repurposed a shelving unit and a glass-panel mirrored door that were stock piled in the garage when they moved in.

Jim painted the outside of the shed to match the house, white green on the body (painted by the previous owners), plus the purple and dark green that the Chatterers added. The shed got two additional colors—blue-green indigo/cobalt—which Jim says creates a "Mardi Gras" look that he likes.

Inside, Jim lined the shed with salvaged fence pickets dressed up with all the different sizes of paint that were left over from projects around the house. He nailed them up horizontally as endpaper paneling, creating a mixy quilt of colors that's perfect for a building that the family now refers to as the Harry Potter-ish Shed.

ABOVE: The diamond-cut-potting-shed trellis created when Jim's dad, the gardener, a whimsical master, encouraged the use of old, discarded materials. The desk, a rug made from recycled jeans, and the boxes well suit rustic summer picnics or up-cycled art pieces. Right: Leslie's mobile.

Last winter, Jim was back in his basement workshop, designing and building the next new fixture for the summer's garden walls, which take place on July 29 and 30. He rigged a saw chain and corrugated pipe into a fountain, his fourth, others feature a fish-shaped spout (a kind of water spout); a collection of hand-painted ceramic pieces threaded onto a pipe, and an ornate, jagged copper coil flanking a copper tubing that Jim cut and shaped into boucheron leaves and vines—a design inspired by a fountain in Italy that he saw at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in London. Having another fountain will be great, Jim says. "One splash, oneinkle, one huge. This will sound more like falling water."

To a visitor's eye, the garden looks complete, though it's "just at the 75-percent level," Leslie says. Jim's self-deceiving, about a few more frost-free days. And the kitchen garden is due for reworking, she adds, because the soil is too sandy for most vegetables. "Every time Jim writes a new proposal, I think, 'Oh, no, now what?' Leslie says. "But we'll eventually run out of space." ■

WANT MORE? See additional photos on [The Gardening Channel.com/Family Garden](http://www.thegardeningchannel.com/family-garden).

before + after

# Fresh Start

Relocating the kitchen allows a family to create a big, bright, open space that connects to the deck—with its grilling island—and serves as the hub of the house

BY NINA MALKIN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEN GUTTMAYER  
PRODUCED BY TRISHA LEWIS | STYLING BY SARAH ALBA

**Goldilocks** may be a fairy-tale character, but the quest for "just right" inspires many a real-life remodel. Shortly after moving into their 1944 house in San Carlos, California, Mike Hoss and Lisa Paster realized their kitchen just wouldn't do for their crew. "It was too small, too dim, and too bare-bones for Mike's considerable cooking skills. "We wanted a central open gathering place with casual eating areas, lots of storage, and quality appliances," Mike says. "All materials would have to stand up to kids, dogs, and assorted spills." As part of a whole-house renovation that included a seven-story addition, architect Steve Svartvanger upped the two bedrooms in the back of the house for the new kitchen, which now opens onto a deck with a fully loaded grill island. The kitchen's bold palette of green, yellow, and blue is tempered by white and off-white painted cabinetry, natural countertops, and wood floors. Now the family can host it all, from ambitious dinner parties to crowd-pleasing barbecues to impromptu book clubs provided over by the kids, Carson, 13, and Eli, 12. "We love the freedom and flexibility it offers," Mike says. "It's perfect for us."

**BEFORE** Measuring 30 square feet, the former kitchen was dark, hot, minimal storage and counter space, and came with basic appliances.

**AFTER** Any light-and-color scheme can fit the size of this new space—the recessed-backsplash recessed-panel cabinets in pro-style range and rotatable island central.



Recessed lighting  
up the ceiling  
and is repeated  
throughout the house

before + after

### Neat and tidy

Commonly used in the mudroom and the dining room, this built-in quadruple-duty storage zone includes a drop zone, charging station, wet bar and coffee counter. "It's great to make coffee without getting up from the sofa to go to the kitchen," says Mike. "It's also a great spot for kids to charge their devices." Mike Hines, Los Angeles, California



For Mike Hines, Lisa Porter, and their children, Cameron and Eli, this built-in kitchen island is plenty of family fun and sociability with friends.



### Smart storage

The island holds shelves for cookbooks and cabinets for cleaning supplies as well as trash and recycling bins. It's the family's go-to spot for sociability, snacking and food prep. Venetia, Pennsylvania



### Light dining

With two walls of floor-to-ceiling windows, this eating area is bright and airy, with views of the outdoors. A U-shaped banquette sofa red with cushions and a table with a live-edge, reclaimed-wood top give it a rustic-chic look. This room comfortably seats seven. Winnetka, Illinois

### Decked out

The grill is on the same level as the kitchen for safety and convenience. It's built into a cabinet with a bridge, a sink and storage. Overhead lights and heaters extend its use into the evening, prime grilling time.

Steph Pfeifer



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### before

Two small bedrooms were gutted for the kitchen (and replaced in the new second story).



INTERIOR: ANDREW MCKEE

### after

Relocated and rebuilt, the kitchen now opens onto a grilling deck and gets great light.



3. Pulls a door to access the new deck and updated kitchen

4. Built a U-shaped barbecue, adding windows on the exterior walls and a shelf on the interior side

5. Left a wide opening to the hallway, which leads to the office and a first-floor master suite

6. Fit a wet bar into the space below the new staircase, made a wider opening to the dining room within the

# REDO YOUR ROOF

**Four out of five homeowners opt for asphalt shingles—here's the lowdown on choosing the right ones for your own roof.** BY SAL VAGLICA

**From keeping your house** weather tight to rapping up curb appeal, there's a lot riding on your roof. It has to withstand decades of blizzards, sun, pounding rains, gusting winds, and in many cases, snow and sleet, as it protects you from the elements — while looking good from the exterior.

When it comes to maintaining your home, a new roof is one of the biggest value preservers you have to offer. While that can be intimidating, experts agree that getting the job done right boils down to a few, simple pieces. First, explore colors and styles by driving around your neighborhood to see how houses similar to yours look with different simple colors and shapes. Most manufacturers have options in all the basic color family sets, browns and reds, blues and greens, grays and blacks, and golds and taupes. Then, as with any remodeling job, work with a top-notch contractor. The major shingle manufacturers' websites list approved installers by ZIP code, often highlighting those who've passed basic professional training. The quality of the work will likely depend on whether or not these three steps are followed.

Up ahead: what you need to know about choosing and installing an asphalt seal that will protect and enhance your home for years to come.

For a color scheme like this, pick a light-colored shingle or shingle-like material like the darker shingle street in the architectural samples here, which fits with the house's style. Similar to others, Timberline HD shingle is Dysyn Corp's about \$197 per roofing square (per case).



## Overlay vs. tear off

They use the same shingles, but these two installation methods are very different.

## OVERLATE: PUTTING ON A SECOND LAYER

Most building codes allow for two layers of asphalt shingles on a roof, so stripping off everything down to the plywood sheathing may not be your only choice. Adding insulation layers over existing ones is less expensive and faster, requiring less labor but it also means you lose the chance to reduce the sheathing's chance of water damage if you ever run into poor grade butlers some damage to sheathing from a downed tree or tree limb shingles in a wind storm can also play a role in water damage.

TEAR OFF: STEPPING AWAY THE OLD BOOK

More expensive because of the additional labor and materials, peeling off the roof down to the sheathing is generally optional if you already have two layers. The Old House general contractor, Tom, says he finds this route a win when the roof is just a single layer so he can find the source of any water damage, upgrade the sheathing, and install shingles so there will be further.

## WHAT IT COSTS

A new 3,250-square-foot roof can range from \$8,500 to more than \$20,000. Here's what goes into a contractor's quote.

- **MATERIALS**: 50%: transports require many unspent parts and unnecessary movements and storage areas. In an overlay, the savings are the same material, and they amount to 50% of the total cost, about 15%

- **LAISURE:** 35% - Scrapping off a vast network of intensive and complicated roof-lines can knock the cost by up to 25%. An average roof is a 10% City plus 20% living below costs to about 25% of the budget.

— **DISPOSAL.** I say 'You know where you are' is  
most becoming to a Disposer.

- **JOHN SITE EXTRAS | 5%** This can include Team Penetrating, bundles of strengtheners up to the roof and rafter, racking, and double soffits.



## Pick a color

It's a big decision, but no need to panic. Architectural color consultant Bonnie Knims explains how a new roof can enhance your house's paint job and boost its overall appeal.



**BLACK** This dark slate roof works with gray, blue, green, and white siding. When it's paired with a roof of varying tones, as here, an asphalt shingle with varying tones can add interest. **Color:** Dark slate gray (about \$50 per square); *terracotta.com*



**GRAY** Lining the house colors in a roof shingle's shade or two darker is an easy way to get a unified look. **Color:** Gray (about \$60 per square); *terracotta.com* **Color:** Yellow ochre or red-brown roof. The mustard-color trim also lets the house's white and reds resonate through. **Color:** Yellow ochre. **Color:** Mustard yellow (about \$50 per square); *terracotta.com*



**BROWN** A two-tone shingle adds interest when the house is one consistent color, as here. This pale tan roof uses a light-colored shingle on the crusty yellow clapboards. Darker reddish-brown roofs often cap off red brick and all-white houses. **Color:** Tan (about \$60 per square); *terracotta.com* **Color:** Desert Tan (about \$60 per square); *swishcoloring.com*



**RED** While bold, a red roof can be a good fit for gray, white, and taupe houses. One way to be sure: Pick a recessed red shingle that looks like some of the siding colors. This oxidized roof, which also passes tests of the fire and smoke departments, is shown. **Color:** Spanish Red (about \$60 per square); *swishcoloring.com*



**GREEN** Earth tones tend to look harmonious together. This yellow-green roof is a natural fit for the brick-and-taupe colors and the mustard-yellow siding. Like brown, green shingle colors tend to work well with tan and yellows as well as whites. **Color:** Yellow ochre. **Color:** Green Empire Green (about \$60 per square); *terracotta.com*



**GRAY-BLUE** On smaller houses where color matters just as much as the roof, a colored shingle. Here, the roof's lighter gray-blue tones reflect the house's color while the darker ones add balance and have a greater visual impact. **Color:** Desert Tan (about \$60 per square); *terracotta.com*

## CUSTOM LOOKS



**Pattern play** Introduce instant texture with standard shingles cut into diamonds with a standard shingle trimmer as needed. So it's a relatively fast of the roof. This pattern may require extra fasteners for the dormer siding and fascia trim. **Color:** Copper Extra Gray, Dryn Brick, and Desert Tan (about \$60 per square); *swishcoloring.com*



**Tealish-like curves** Flexible, polymer-modified asphalt shingles can be installed in courses to "flow" over the curved edges of a roof, when it's built to evade the straight edges on the Tudor cottage here. **Color:** Legion's NaturalWood (about \$60 per square); *terracotta.com*

## CONSIDER A "COOL ROOF"

Dark granules on laminated asphalt shingles absorb the sun's radiation, pushing heat into the building, which explains why an all-black roof is 10 degrees warmer than the white temperature on a hot summer day.

Cool roof asphalt shingles are lower than conventional asphalt shingles. Some shingles are EnergyStar rated. Others have been tested by the Cool Roof Rating Council, when comparing these products look for the highest numbers in solar reflectance and thermal resistance. In the scale from 0 to 100, expect shingles anywhere from 10 to 50 percent more for cool roof shingles.

Potential savings on yearly cooling costs

**10-15%**

See on the next page

## WHILE YOU'RE AT IT...

Tearing off an old roof offers the opportunity to have your roofing contractor add one of these upgrades.

**CUPOLA** Either a ridge vent, because standard gussets are used on coiled houses, or a standard vent, or an integrated vent, which has a built-in ridge vent that runs through the roof or ridge vent, that vent is your vent at the top of the building.



**COPPER CUTTERS** Replacing gutters can include the cost of new gutters because your existing brackets have to be replaced. Upgrading to copper gutters costs more than twice as much as vinyl or aluminum, but they add style (and longevity) that should last a lifetime.



**SKYLIGHT** Brightening up a living space with a roof window might be easier than you think. First, the roofers cut the sheathing and trim an opening, then cut a corresponding hole in the ceiling. A light-shield built like a box then joins the two to bring daylight into the house.



# directory

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**COVER** See the listing for "Bright Ideas."

**HOME SOLUTIONS** (p. 12-14) Retail Themes  
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**BUDGET IDEAS** Wholesaling: Board products  
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**BUILD IT** Makes a rustic planter (p. 47-48)  
By Anne L. O'Leary, enol.com

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Caron Models, Commercial MA, www.karen.com  
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**THE HISTORY** Built by the town's founder and namesake, George Wethersfield, this circa 1803 house has a storied past. Part of a notable New England family that includes a signer of the Declaration of Independence, Wethersfield moved west and turned what had been a small settlement into a thriving community. Along the way, he raised seven children while working as a schoolteacher. The 1803 marriage of his oldest daughter, Ann, to the son of a prominent abolitionist helped Wethersfield Farm become a key figure in the movement, notably John Brown.

Local legend credits the namesake of the house as a "Wethersfield." Last year, researchers at a nearby university hypothesized that claim. Further research has found that the Wethersfield name is long gone, and has been a common name for over 1,000 years ago.

**WHY SAVE IT?** The approximately 2,500-square-foot, two-bedroom home is one of the few Greek Revival houses left in Northern Indiana. Though its cross-gabled roof with decorative eaves is intact, the low-pitched roofs, wide center trials, and Doric columns are hallmarks of the style. Overhanging eaves and flared cornices have protected the house for nearly 200 years, so it retains many original details inside.

**WHAT IT NEEDS** The timber-framed structure is sound, but the house needs a new roof and revoiced interior siding, and the house needs new HVAC, electrical, and plumbing. Plasterboard repairs to the walls and floors. The house has no kitchen or bath, so it's very limited as a inhabitable addition, new space. It's a great fixer, but for the right person, it's a chance to write the next chapter in this house's history. —GREG VOGO



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Revival  
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- 1. Second floor: 10'-0" x 16'-0". This room features a decorative gabled-style pediment and four symmetrical paneled doors.
- 2. Panelled mantels and built-in shelving are typical of Greek Revival homes.
- 3. The 12'-0" x 12'-0" front porch is a traditional style and looks out onto a landscaped lawn and adjacent Wethersfield Park.
- 4. Many doors remain, with their original hardware, including flanking interior doors and a front door.

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